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AUTHOR Harris, David A.; Parsons, Michael H.
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ABSTRACT

Adjunct (part-time) faculty comprise 35 to 45 percent of the teachers in two-year colleges, yet receive virtually no systematic assistance in professional development. In 1972, Hagerstown Junior College (Maryland) initiated a program of staff development for adjunct faculty to remedy this deficiency. The program is designed to familiarize adjunct faculty with college procedures, to ensure instruction of equal quality with that provided by regular faculty, and to establish a process of communication between adjunct and regular faculty and staff. Based on a systems model, the program consists of four parts: recruitment, input, processes, and output. In the recruitment phase, media advertisement is used to secure qualified applicants. The input phase begins with providing the new instructor with the Adjunct Faculty Handbook, which outlines college policies and regulations. An Adjunct Faculty Workshop attempts to initiate communication processes with division chairpersons and other college personnel. Extended availability of auxiliary services and their professional staffs as consultants to adjunct faculty during evening hours characterizes the process phase. Evaluation of the output is provided through objective/subjective student and supervisor evaluations of the adjunct faculty member. (BS)

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Adjunct Faculty:
A Working System of Development

David A. Harris, Ph.D.
Michael H. Parsons, Ed.D.
Hagerstown Junior College
Hagerstown, Maryland
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I. Introduction

"Enrollment Increase: Biggest in a Decade."[1] A Chronicle of Higher Education headline states that American higher education appears to have experienced the largest one-year increase in enrollment since the mid-sixties. Closer analysis of the statistics indicates that two-year colleges reported an increase of 19.3%.[2] One solution to the problems posed by such unexpected growth is increased reliance on part-time faculty.

Recently, these individuals have been referred to as the "step-children" of the two-year college.[3] Adjunct faculty comprise from 35% to 45% of the teachers in the two-year colleges.[4] Yet, they receive virtually no systematic attention. Their courses are scheduled at "off-times", they receive limited assistance with course development, evaluation of their efforts is a haphazard process, and their access to staff development is limited, at best. The adjunct faculty are an often used yet little appreciated resource in today's two-year college.

Beginning in 1972, Hagerstown Junior College (HJC), Hagerstown, Maryland initiated a systematic program to realize the potential of the college's adjunct faculty. The reasons for such actions were obvious. A changing clientele, expanded evening and off-campus programming, and an increase in the technological specialization of program offerings necessitated improvement in the parity between regular and adjunct faculty. Assessment after three years reveals that the results have been worth the

effort.

II. Program Objectives

Careful needs assessment produced three major objectives to be met. First, the adjunct staff are, often, the primary contact which students have with the college. Therefore, these individuals must be sufficiently familiar with the college procedures to meet student needs. Second, students who enroll in courses taught by adjunct faculty have the right to expect instruction of equal quality with that provided by regular faculty. So, the instructional system used by the college needs to be extended to the adjunct faculty. Finally, there must be a process of communication designed to identify and deal with those idiosyncratic needs resulting from nearly forty individuals teaching over five hundred students. Each component of the program is designed to realize a dimension of the objectives.

III. Organization and Implementation

The system designed to develop adjunct faculty consists of four parts; recruitment, input, processes, and output. These elements will be described in detail later. They group together to become a systems model closely paralleling the one described by Banathy.[5] The college has found "systems" to be a productive approach to instruction. The paradigm seems to be doing as well with Adjunct Faculty development.

The college concentrates on locating the most qualified individual available and improving his delivery capability.

No procedures exist to increase the subject-matter competency of the adjunct person. It is assumed that the individual selected has expertise in a teaching field.

Whenever staff development is discussed, the issue of cost arises. In dealing with the regular faculty, a college must commit resources to development. The adjunct program differs significantly. The needs of the participants are such that they can be met with the expenditure of minimal extra resources. The key to the cost dimension of the program is creative application of previously committed resources.

Finally, much discussion regarding staff development concerns motivation. Regular faculty require a system emphasizing awareness of the benefits for them inherent in participating in development activities.[6] The same is not true for adjunct faculty. Since these individuals teach because they want to, rather than to make a living, they tend to be quite receptive to opportunities for self-improvement. The challenge is to design a program that will allow the widest possible participation.

IV. Components

The initial aspect of any system is recruitment of the participants. A national survey revealed that 67% of the institutions surveyed (166) have no formal recruitment procedures for adjunct faculty.[7] HJC uses a procedure designed to recruit the best available candidate. A committee screens applications and recommendations from faculty and staff. If no qualified candidate

emerges, media advertisement is used. The result has been highly qualified applicants.

The screening committee reviews the applicants and recommends its choices to the Dean of Instruction. After his review, if the candidate is acceptable, a contract is written. If the individual is not accepted, the process begins again.

When an individual is employed, he is provided with several documents. The college has adopted a format for course outlines and the individual is given one for the course he is to teach. The text book and supportive materials are also provided. The person meets with the appropriate Division Chairperson and Associate Dean. A discussion takes place regarding the construction of the individual's outline. Particular attention is given to preparing course objectives, student evaluation, use of media, and classroom delivery techniques. The adjunct faculty member is expected to have an outline ready for the students when the class begins. If difficulty arises, the person requests the division chairperson for assistance.

The first phase of the input process, following recruitment, is providing the adjunct faculty member with the Adjunct Faculty Handbook. If the individual is to be of maximum benefit to himself, the students, and the institution, he must be conversant with college policies, regulations, and procedures. The handbook lowers anxiety levels, relieves college staff of the repetitive task of briefing each one, and provides each person with a ready

reference when unanticipated questions arise. Bender and Hammons have identified an Adjunct Handbook as a critical incident in adjunct faculty development.[8] More importantly, seven semesters of adjunct faculty at HJC have unanimously praised the publication.

The second phase of the input process is the adjunct faculty workshop. Bender's national survey discovered that two-year colleges, generally, have not developed workshops tailored to meet the needs of adjunct faculty.[9] At HJC, the workshop is traditionally conducted during the second week of classes. There are several recurrent goals for the workshop. First, those college personnel with whom the adjunct faculty member will work are introduced. The intent is to reduce the feeling of being a stranger and to foster communication. Second, questions regarding the Adjunct Handbook are answered. Usually, several unanticipated issues are raised. All adjunct personnel, as well as regular staff, benefit from the discussion. Finally, the division chairpersons meet with their adjunct faculty to clarify discipline questions and discuss divisional matters. The workshop attempts to initiate communication processes which will continue through the semester.

Hagerstown Junior College has developed several auxiliary services which are essential to a successful adjunct faculty program. These processes comprise the essence of college contact with the individual during the semester. Most of the adjunct

faculty at HJC teach in the evening. The college established an evening coordinator role five years ago with each of the college's administrators performing the role several times each semester. The evening calendar is made available to the adjunct faculty. There are two reasons for so doing. First, if a problem arises, the individual knows who to contact. Second, if the individual desires to discuss something with a given administrator, he may plan accordingly. Another critical auxiliary service is access to media. The college media center remains open during the evening to make it possible for the adjunct faculty to mediate instruction or to discuss ideas for special assistance. Finally, the college, as part of its commitment to the system approach to instruction, has developed a series of learning centers. These centers remain open during the evening. The adjunct faculty may refer students to them, integrate their services into the instructional process, or discuss alternate approaches to realizing course objectives with center personnel. Over the past three years, major complaints from adjunct faculty have declined appreciably. The foregoing services are cited as the reason when adjunct faculty are surveyed.

Earlier in this presentation reference was made to creative application of previously committed resources. Each of the foregoing components has a cost. Yet, the costs have been met by re-arranging schedules in such a way that time is more efficiently used. Therefore, a major staff development endeavor has

been brought to fruition with the commitment of minimal new resources.

The final aspect of the development system is evaluation of the output. Bender and Hammons indicate that "Student evaluation or other forms of institutional evaluations for part-time faculty are seldom part of a planned program."[10] HJC adopted a dual evaluation system two years ago. Each adjunct faculty member is evaluated the first time he teaches and annually thereafter. The evaluation involves an objective/subjective student evaluation, and an objective/subjective supervisor evaluation. The results of the evaluation are tabulated and used in a conference with the faculty member. The results are a major determinant in whether the individual will continue to teach for the college. The evaluation of output becomes input, and thereby, closes the loop in the HJC adjunct faculty development system.

The HJC approach, including recruitment strategies, handbook, workshop, auxiliary services and evaluation, provides a viable adjunct faculty cadre for the college. Without the system, the college would be unable to meet the needs of a clientele which is expanding and changing in nature.

V. Conclusion

The program operating at Hagerstown Junior College is a dynamic one. It grows and changes as the need arises. Only in this manner can the college remain accountable to its ever changing clientele.

During the adjunct faculty workshop and during the conference with each teacher, the question is asked "how can the college improve its services to you?" During the fall semester, 1975 a significant issue emerged. Many adjunct faculty requested the opportunity to meet together during the semester to discuss common instructional concerns.

Beginning in the January, 1976 semester, an adjunct faculty instructional clinic will be held. It will be organized by the college administration but conducted by the faculty themselves. It will meet as often as the group has material to discuss. Attendance will be voluntary. The result, hopefully, will be a greater professionalization of the adjunct faculty and improved instruction for the College.

Twelve years ago Kuhns stated "American junior colleges would be hard-pressed to offer the wealth and variety of programs currently available were it not for dedicated instruction provided by hundreds of part-time faculty members."[11] The author chronicled the problems faced by adjunct faculty. In 1974, Hammons reviewed the status of adjunct faculty development. He says that few colleges systematically assist their adjunct personnel and suggests "...each institution should consider the value of in-service activities specifically designed for part-time staff."[12] It would seem that sufficient time has passed. The Hagerstown model is not perfect but it has been effective in meeting the needs of students and faculty. Christ, in a parable spoken

nearly two thousand years ago, stated that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Is not the adjunct faculty member equally worthy of development?

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